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BLACK PANTHER

A MARVEL COMICS EVENT

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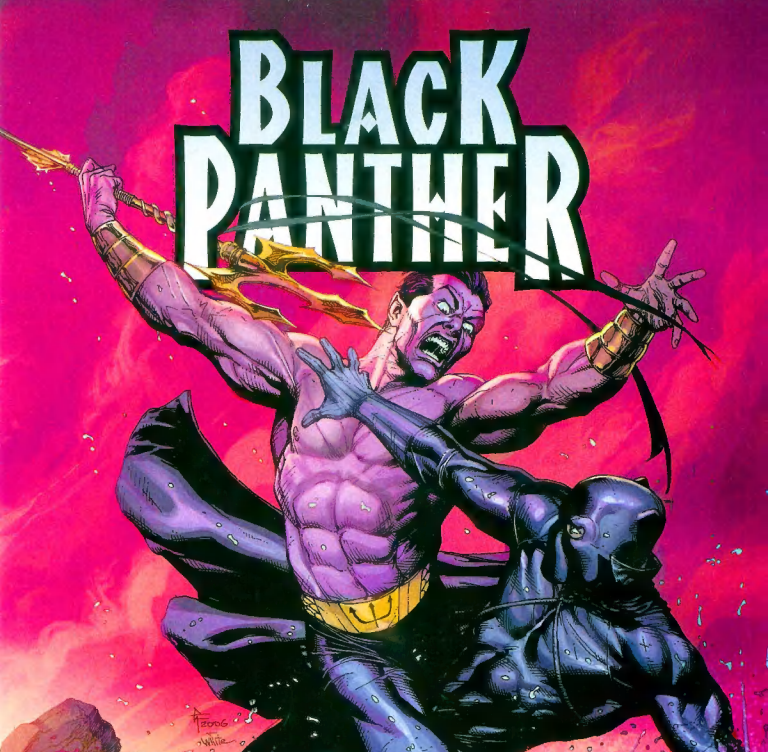
GARCIA



PREVIOUSLY

Unfettered by the yoke of colonization, the African warrior nation of WAKANDA flourished and became a high-tech, resource-rich, ecologically-sound paradise—one that makes the rest of the world seem primitive in comparison. Ruling over this kingdom are the BLACK PANTHER and his queen, STORM.

The Black Panther is more than just a head of state, the leader of a warrior cult. The Black Panther is the embodiment of the ideals of a people. While T'Challa's marriage to Storm was a happy occasion, the couple was reminded that Wakanda faces difficult times ahead. Now more than ever, Wakanda needs the Black Panther to preserve its integrity and guide its people through the political minefield created by the Civil War in the United States.

To assuage the fears of those who would see them as a threat and to ensure Wakanda's security in a world rocked by Civil War, the Black Panther and Storm thought it best to embark upon a diplomatic tour amongst the larger centers of global power. The couple's first stop was Latveria, where they were drawn into battle with their longtime adversary, Dr. Doom. Their second, the Moon, to serve as counsel to the Inhuman royal family. And their most recent visit: Atlantis, where Namor suggested T'Challa lead the global resistance against America's Superhuman Registration Act!

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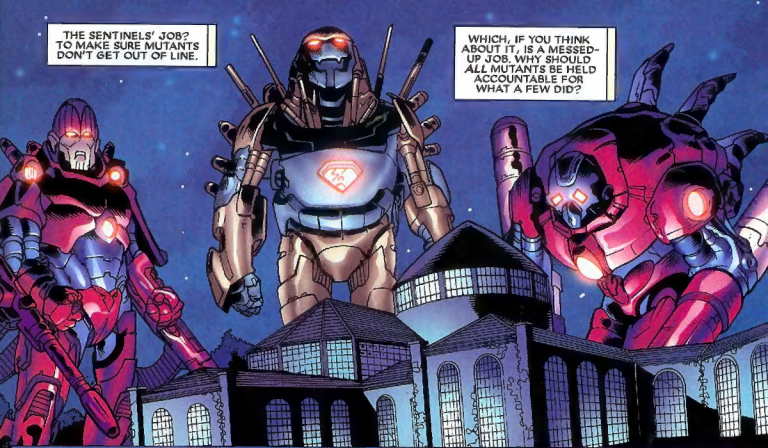
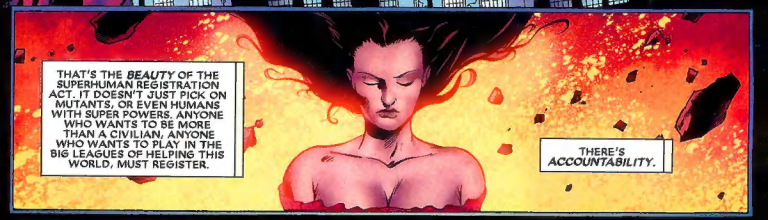
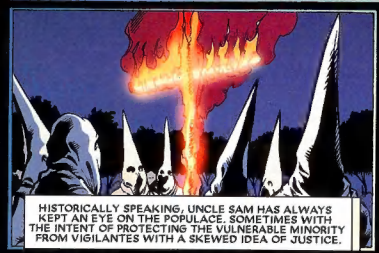
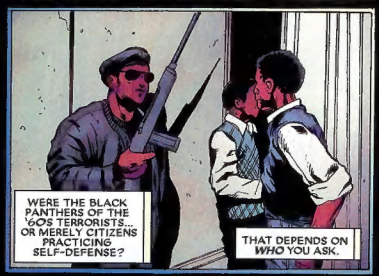
MY NAME IS JIM RHODES.
ALSO KNOWN AS THE *WAR MACHINE*.
BECAUSE OF MY LONG FRIENDSHIP WITH TONY STARK, I AM THE ONLY OTHER GUY EVER TO WEAR THE WORLD'S GREATEST WEAPON.
SO WHEN GENERAL LAZER ASKED ME TO LEAD UP THE NEW *SENTINEL* PROGRAM, I WASN'T INTO IT, BUT I OWED MY MAN...
SO HERE I *AM*.

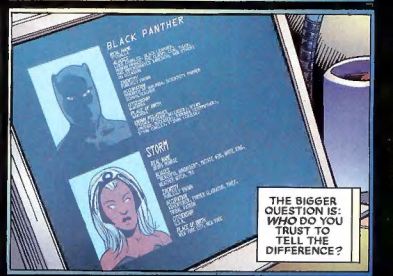

THE SENTINELS' JOB? TO MAKE SURE MUTANTS DON'T GET OUT OF LINE.
WHICH, IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT, IS A MESSED-UP JOB. WHY SHOULD *ALL* MUTANTS BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR WHAT A FEW DID?


THAT'S THE *BEAUTY* OF THE SUPERHUMAN REGISTRATION ACT. IT DOESN'T JUST PICK ON MUTANTS. OR EVEN HUMANS WITH SUPER POWERS. ANYONE WHO WANTS TO BE MORE THAN A CIVILIAN, ANYONE WHO WANTS TO PLAY IN THE BIG LEAGUES OF HELPING THIS WORLD, MUST REGISTER.
THERE'S *ACCOUNTABILITY.*


HISTORICALLY SPEAKING, UNCLE SAM HAS ALWAYS KEPT AN EYE ON THE POPULACE. SOMETIMES WITH THE INTENT OF PROTECTING THE VULNERABLE MINORITY FROM VIGILANTES WITH A SKEWED IDEA OF JUSTICE.

SOMETIMES WITH THE INTENT OF MONITORING THE MINORITY ITSELF.
F.B.I.


WERE THE BLACK PANTHERS OF THE '60S TERRORISTS... OR MERELY CITIZENS PRACTICING SELF-DEFENSE?
THAT DEPENDS ON *WHO* YOU ASK.

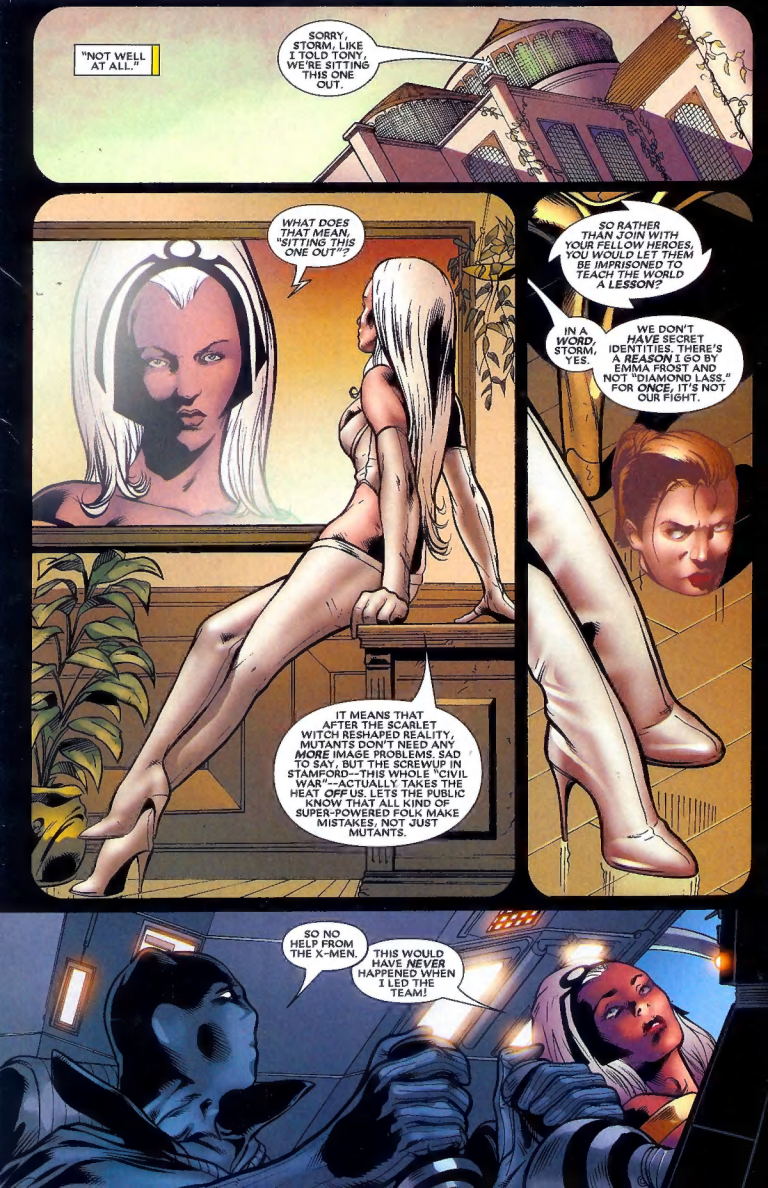

BLACK PANTHER
STORM
THE BIGGER QUESTION IS: *WHO* DO YOU TRUST TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE?

LONDON, ENGLAND, ON THE THAMES...
YOU, OF ALL PEOPLE, KNOW IT'S INAPPROPRIATE TO COMMENT ON THE LOCAL POLITICS OF ANOTHER COUNTRY, T'CHALLA...
...A BETTER QUESTION WOULD BE, WHY ARE YOU INVOLVING YOURSELF IN THIS?
BECAUSE HE HAS A CONSCIENCE, BRIAN. ISN'T THAT WHAT WE "SUPER HEROES" DO: STAND UP FOR THE RIGHT THING, REGARDLESS OF NATIONAL BOUNDARIES?
RIIIIIIIIGHT. FORGOT ABOUT THAT. THANKS.
AND YOU'RE CERTAIN THAT FIGHTING REGISTRATION IS THE RIGHT THING?
BRIAN, REGARDLESS OF HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THE TRAGEDY AT STAMFORD, AND HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT VIGILANTES, WHAT'S HAPPENING IN AMERICA IS WRONG.
WE CAN'T JUST SIT ON THE SIDELINES.
LOOK, THIS ISN'T AS SIMPLE AS TEAMING UP TO FIGHT DOC OCK. YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT REED RICHARDS, TONY STARK--SOME OF THE SMARTEST, MOST HONORABLE MEN ON THE PLANET!
AFTER ALL THE TIME YOU'VE SPENT FIGHTING ALONGSIDE MUTANTS, YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND THAT GOVERNMENTS HATE AND FEAR SUPERHUMANS? THAT THIS IS AN EXCUSE TO LOCK THEM UP AND THROW AWAY THE KEY?
YOU'RE EXACTLY RIGHT ON THAT, ORORO. HUMANS DO FEAR US. THE QUESTION IS, HOW DO WE REDUCE THAT FEAR?
NOT AT THE COST OF WHOLESALE INJUSTICE.

XAVIER FORMED A SUPER-TEAM TO PROVE TO HUMANITY THAT MUTANTS WERE *NOT* TO BE FEARED.
IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE NOT GOING TO CONVINCE EACH OTHER TODAY, BRIAN. I APPRECIATE YOU TAKING TIME TO HEAR ME OUT.
YOU'RE A REASONABLE MAN, T'CHALLA. I'M SURE YOUR PRESENCE IN THIS MATTER WILL BE A CALMING INFLUENCE.
AND *YOU*, ORORO, I HOPE YOU'RE NOT *TOO* CROSS AT ME.
NOT CROSS, JUST DISAPPOINTED. YOU'VE LED A VERY PRIVILEGED LIFE, BRIAN. YOUR *TRUST* IN THE SYSTEM REFLECTS THAT.
UH, T'CHALLA? ONE MORE THING. *THE EBONY BLADE*? VALUABLE BRITISH ARTIFACT...? PART OF OUR NATIONAL HERITAGE...? ANY CHANCE YOU'LL GIVE THAT BACK...?
YOU MEAN THE ONE I *TOOK* FROM AN *ASSASSIN* HIRED TO *KILL* ME?
WHEN I'M *DONE* WITH IT, I'LL LET YOU KNOW.

...HERE WE SEE THE KING AND QUEEN OF WAKANDA DONATING HI-TECH ARTIFICIAL LIMBS TO MAIMED CHILDREN IN RWANDA...
WITH SO MUCH CONFLICT IN THE WORLD, WE THOUGHT THE BEST WAY TO COMBAT IS THROUGH ACTS OF LOVE.
OH FOR PETE'S SAKE!
DO THEY REALLY EXPECT PEOPLE TO BUY INTO THIS SHAMELESS POLITICAL PANDERING?
HELPING MAIMED KIDS IS ENDEARING TO THE PUBLIC, SIR. PERHAPS IF IRON MAN CAN WHIP UP SOMETHING SIMILAR--
NOT YOUR DEPARTMENT, ROSS. KEEP YOUR BRIGHT IDEAS TO YOURSELF.
BESIDES, THEY THOUGHT OF IT FIRST. WE'D LOOK LIKE COPYCATS.
GOOD POINT, SIR.
NEXT STOP FOR THE ROYAL COUPLE IS THE UNITED STATES, WHERE THEY HAVE MEETINGS SCHEDULED WITH OPRAH WINFREY AND THE PRESIDENT!
I'VE GOT A BETTER IDEA:

"WE'LL USE THAT GOOD P.R. THEY'RE STOCKING UP ON *AGAINST* THEM."
I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN IN MORE THAN YOUR FAIR SHARE OF BRUTAL LIFE-AND-DEATH BATTLES, ORORO, BUT THIS IS *POLITICS*.
IF POLITICS MEANS HELPING KIDS LIKE THAT, THEN YES, I *LOVE* POLITICS.
I WISH IT *WERE*, ORORO. WE'VE GOT A VERY DANGEROUS ENEMY AHEAD OF US.
SO WHAT'S OUR PLAN BESIDES BUILDING PUBLIC SUPPORT?
IT'S MULTI-PRONGED:
"OUR LOBBYISTS IN WASHINGTON HAVE MADE LARGE CONTRIBUTIONS TO CONSERVATIVE CONGRESSMEN WHO'LL ARGUE THAT THE SUPERHUMAN REGISTRATION ACT SHOULD BE OVERTURNED BECAUSE IT REPRESENTS MORE *BIG GOVERNMENT INTRUSION* INTO THE LIVES OF AMERICANS.
"MEANWHILE, MY AGENTS IN LONDON ARE MAKING A SERIES OF CIRCUITOUS STOCK TRANSACTIONS THROUGH SHELL CORPORATIONS TO ATTEMPT TO GAIN A CONTROLLING SHARE OF STARK ENTERPRISES.
"STARK WILL NO DOUBT BE ANTICIPATING AN ATTACK ON HIS LIVELIHOOD AND WILL HAVE A 'POISON PILL' DEFENSE READY."
HOW DID YOUR CALL TO THE *X-MEN* GO?
NOT WELL.


"NOT WELL AT ALL."
SORRY, STORM, LIKE I TOLD TONY, WE'RE SITTING THIS ONE OUT.
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN, "SITTING THIS ONE OUT"?
IT MEANS THAT AFTER THE SCARLET WITCH RESHAPED REALITY, MUTANTS DON'T NEED ANY *MORE* IMAGE PROBLEMS. SAD TO SAY, BUT THE SCREWUP IN STAMFORD--THIS WHOLE "CIVIL WAR"--ACTUALLY TAKES THE HEAT *OFF* US. LETS THE PUBLIC KNOW THAT ALL KIND OF SUPER-POWERED FOLK MAKE MISTAKES. NOT JUST MUTANTS.
SO RATHER THAN JOIN WITH YOUR FELLOW HEROES, YOU WOULD LET THEM BE IMPRISONED TO TEACH THE WORLD A LESSON?
IN A *WORD*, STORM, YES.
WE DON'T *HAVE* SECRET IDENTITIES. THERE'S A *REASON* I GO BY EMMA FROST AND NOT "DIAMOND LASS." FOR *ONCE*, IT'S NOT OUR FIGHT.
SO NO HELP FROM THE X-MEN.
THIS WOULD HAVE *NEVER* HAPPENED WHEN I LED THE TEAM!

MEANWHILE, AT THE WHITE HOUSE...
...A GROUP OF ANGRY PROTESTERS HAVE GATHERED AROUND THE WHITE HOUSE TODAY.
WE LOVE &
PANTHER 4EVER!
HAIL TO THE KING!
...AN ENTHUSIASTIC CROWD HAS GATHERED IN FRONT OF THE WHITE HOUSE TO GREET THE ROYAL COUPLE OF KING T'CHALLA AND QUEEN ORORO!
WAKANDA!
STORM + NTHER
IN THE INTEREST OF PUBLIC SAFETY, WE ARE URGING PEOPLE TO STAY HOME.
C'MON, WE HAD TO BE HERE. THIS IS WAY BETTER THAN CHARLES AND DIANA!
...THE QUESTION IS:
WILL THE ARRIVAL OF A WEALTHY AFRICAN KING AND HIS MUTANT WIFE CALM THE CROWD...
...OR INCITE IT?
I HAVEN'T BEEN IN A CROWD THIS HYPED SINCE MICHAEL JACKSON'S VICTORY TOUR IN '84! AND THE QUESTION ON EVERYONE'S LIPS:
"WHERE THE AFTER-PARTY AT?"
STORM
PANTH
4EVE

MEANWHILE, AT THE SENTINEL COMMAND CENTER...
TONY NEEDS HELP. I'M GONNA GIVE IT.
WITH YOUR SENTINEL.
LISTEN, YOU'VE WATCHED THE NEWS. TONY CAN'T BE EVERYWHERE, SO THINGS HAVE GONE BAD IN PLACES. I CAN HELP.
THIS IS A REALLY HAIRY SITUATION TODAY, JIM. LOTS OF CIVILIANS. AND THEY ALL THINK THIS BLACK PANTHER GUY IS THE BEST THING SINCE SLICED BREAD.
WHAT'S YOUR TAKE ON HIM?
OH MAN. IS BLACK PANTHER THE NEW LITMUS TEST QUESTION?
THE QUESTION WHITES ASK BLACKS TO SEE IF THEY ARE ANTI-WHITE OR TOO "PRO-BLACK" OR WHATEVER.
HEY, RELAX--I WAS JUST ASKING A QUESTION!
TO BE HONEST, IF I WAS TASKED TO TAKE DOWN CAPTAIN AMERICA, I DON'T KNOW IF I COULD DO IT.
THAT'S WHY I'M HELPING AND YOU'RE NOT.

WELCOME TO THE WHITE HOUSE, YOUR HIGHNESS. THE PRESIDENT IS WAITING FOR YOU.
EXCUSE ME, MS. MUNROE. WE JUST NEED A MINUTE OF YOUR TIME HERE.
JUST RIGHT HERE...IT WILL ONLY TAKE A MINUTE.
GOOD DAY, YOUR HIGHNESSES. I...UH...JUST HAVE SOME SIMPLE PAPER-WORK FOR MS. MUNROE TO SIGN BEFORE WE--
REGISTRATION FORMS?
QUEEN ORORO OF WAKANDA IS A HEAD OF STATE, SUBJECT TO DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY.
IF YOU DON'T MAKE SAUDI ROYALTY PAY PARKING TICKETS, THEN DON'T SHOVE THESE RIDICULOUS FORMS ■ MY FACE.
THE PRESIDENT CANNOT MEET WITH YOU UNTIL MS. MUNROE SIGNS THE FORMS.
ER...SHE ■ QUEEN OF WAKANDA, NO DOUBT, BUT SHE IS ALSO A U.S. CITIZEN, BORN IN THIS COUNTRY TO AN AMERICAN FATHER. WHICH MAKES HER STATUS... UNCLEAR.
AND THE PRESIDENT CANNOT MEET WITH ANY SUPER-POWERED AMERICANS WHO ARE NOT REGISTERED. IT SENDS THE WRONG MESSAGE.
NOT MEETING WITH THE HEAD OF STATE OF A NATION ON FRIENDLY TERMS WITH THE UNITED STATES SENDS A MESSAGE, TOO.

TONY, I *KNOW* YOU'RE WATCHING ALL OF THIS. I CAN'T *BELIEVE* YOU'RE PLAYING THIS GAME.
I DON'T KNOW WHICH ■ MORE INSULTING--TRYING TO ENTRAP ORORO INTO REGISTRATION, OR *SENDING THIS LOW-LEVEL FUNCTIONARY* TO DO IT!

ARE YOU REFERRING TO TONY STARK, SIR? BECAUSE HE ■ NOT ON WHITE HOUSE GROUNDS.
OF *COURSE* NOT. YOU DIDN'T WANT IT TO LOOK LIKE WE WERE SIGNING OUT OF COERCION OR FRIENDSHIP. THAT WOULD RUIN THE LITTLE PROPAGANDA TAPE YOU WERE MAKING.

YOUR HIGHNESS, THERE WAS CERTAINLY NO INTENTION TO OFFEND YOU. PLEASE STAY AND LET'S TALK THROUGH THIS--
THAT ■ THE *WHOLE POINT*. NO ONE HERE WANTS TO TALK. THEY JUST WANT EVERYONE TO COMPLY WITH THEIR COMMANDS.

I AM *NOT* RIDING IN YOUR STUPID GASOLINE-BURNING CAR. I WILL *NOT* TOLERATE ANOTHER OF YOUR CULTURAL INADEQUACIES A SECOND LONGER.

THERE'S A *NO-FLY ZONE* AROUND THE WHITE HOUSE, YOUR HIGHNESS, SO WE CANNOT BRING THE PLANE HERE WITHOUT INCIDENT. BUT WE WILL BRING A WAKANDAN-SANCTIONED VEHICLE HERE IMMEDIATELY.
FINE.

LOOK--HE'S LEAVING ALREADY?
THEY PISSED HIM OFF THAT FAST?
PAN-THER!
PAN-THER!
WAKANDA!
STOP THE FIGHTING! STOP THE WAR!
HEY, STOP THE SHOVING!
T'CHALLA...
ON IT.
SPEAKER MODE:
THIS IS THE BLACK PANTHER. PLEASE...CALM DOWN. WE DON'T WANT ANYONE TO GET HURT.
DADDY!

HE'S MAKING HIS MOVE!
T'CHALLA!
T'CHALLA.
BOOM!

WHOA...WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?
METHINKS THE GODDESS IS PISSED.
POLICE
THIS RAINSTORM IS A MUTANT MANIFESTATION. THAT'S OUR CUE.
BUT HE'S JUST SAVING THAT KID! WE'RE JUST GOING TO MAKE THINGS WORSE!
GO NOW!
OH GOD, THANK YOU, THANK YOU... MY BABY!
...IT'S OKAY. IT'S OKAY...
POLICE
ORORO MUNROE. YOU ARE UNDER ARREST.

IT WILL FALL CLEAR OF THE CROWD, YES?
AT THIS ANGLE AND TRAJECTORY, A 60-FOOT CLEARANCE.
WATCH YOUR SIX, YOUR SIX...!
THUNK

LOOK AT THAT... A "BROTHER."
KILL THAT SELLOUT PUNK!

GET HIM! GET HIM!
THUNK
CAN YOU TALK?
YES, I CAN.
GOOD. I'LL MAKE SURE NO ONE HURTS YOU.
MY NAME IS JIM RHODES...
...AND I'M A FOOL.
AN IDIOT WHO JUST GOT SAVED FROM THE PEOPLE I'M TRYING TO PROTECT...
...BY THE MAN I'M HERE TO ARREST.
BOOM
NOW WHAT?

RHODEY! ARE YOU OKAY?!
Y-YEAH, TONY. I'M FINE.
SHRRRRIIIIIIIP
HIS VITALS ARE THERE BUT HE'S GOING INTO SHO--
SAVE IT, T'CHALLA. I'M GETTING COMPLETE READOUTS ON HIS MEDICAL CONDITION.
I'M HOLDING YOU RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS.
WE CAME IN PEACE, TONY.
AND I TOLD YOU NOT TO INTERFERE, AS A FRIEND AND A GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE--
TONY, YOU'RE USED TO GETTING YOUR WAY, ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, BUT DON'T EVEN THINK OF TELLING ME WHAT TO DO...EVER.
WE SHOULD LEAVE, YOUR HIGHNESS.
WE'RE NOT DONE WITH THIS.
I KNOW.

THE BIKE-- IT JUST WENT DEAD!
IT'S IRON MAN. HE SHUT IT DOWN REMOTELY.
DON'T EVEN BOTHER THROWING A LIGHTNING BOLT AT ME. IT WILL JUST MAKE ME ANGRIER.

AND DON'T THINK OF TOUCHING MY WIFE.
SIGH
ARE YOU GOING TO GO "MEDIEVAL" ON ME, T'CHALLA?
WHAT THE HELL--
SHRIIIK
IT CUTS THROUGH ANYTHING, THAT EBONY BLADE...
THUMP

BOOOOM
YOU DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD BE THAT SIMPLE, DID YOU, T'CHALLA?
CAN WE END THIS BEFORE SOMEONE GETS HURT?
YES, STOP IT!
TONY, YOU'RE MY BEST FRIEND. THE BLACK PANTHER JUST SAVED MY LIFE. FOR MY SAKE...FOR EVERYBODY'S SAKE...COULD YOU JUST STOP IT?

T'CHALLA, RHODEY'S RIGHT. I'M HAPPY TO STAND DOWN. YOU'VE GOT A COUNTRY OF YOUR OWN TO DEAL WITH.
I CAME HERE ON A DIPLOMATIC MISSION ON BEHALF OF MANY NATIONS THAT ARE APPALLED AT WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE. AND IN A MATTER OF HOURS, MY WORST FEARS HAVE BEEN REALIZED.
FOR THE SAKE OF THE WORLD, MY TIME IN THE UNITED STATES HAS ONLY JUST BEGUN. WHETHER YOU REALIZE IT OR NOT, YOU NEED HELP.
AND YOU SAY WE'RE ARROGANT!
IF YOU CAN'T SEE THINGS ARE OUT OF CONTROL, YOU'RE COMPLETELY BLIND, TONY. I DON'T KNOW ALL THE FACTS. I WON'T TAKE ACTION UNTIL I DO. BUT UNDERSTAND THIS:

WORLD TOUR PART FOUR

INSIDE MAN

REGINALD HUDLIN	MANUEL GARCIA	JAY LEISTEN WITH SEAN PARSONS	MATT MILLA	VC'S RANDY GENTILE	DANIEL KETCHUM	AXEL ALONSO	JOE QUESADA	DAN BUCKLEY
WRITER	PENCILS	INKS	COLORS	LETTERS	ASSISTANT EDITOR	EDITOR	CHIEF	PUBLISHER

NEXT ISSUE: WARTIME!

MAIL TO THE KING!

Greetings, fellow Panther fans! Assistant Editor Daniel Ketchum here, bringing you the latest from Wakanda and abroad. As always, we've got plenty of mail. Let's go to it!

Mail to the King,

BLACK PANTHER #20 was entertaining, but I am getting tired of the whole "Black Bolt can't communicate" thing. Doesn't he know how to use a pencil or a keyboard? Don't the Inhumans have telepaths? How can they be so advanced, yet be unable to come up with a way for deaf or mute individuals to communicate, like American Sign Language? Inquiring minds want to know.

Sincerely,
Jackie Williams
Louisville, KY

I've always imagined Black Bolt's rapport with his family—especially Medusa—to be a particularly strong one. Their communication is more a matter of intuition than anything. They don't always need to articulate their thoughts to each other, because they are often aligned. Medusa will look at Black Bolt and be able to understand him clearly. In their own way, they are communicating.

Of course, I will concede: maybe there are times when a little ASL wouldn't hurt.

Dear Daniel,

Even though there were some passages and details that I really enjoyed, I didn't like the "Wedding of the Century" story arc too much. Excessive hugs, kisses and tears; too much sentimentalism and corny dialogue everywhere. Too cloying for my taste, while the action aspect was mostly omitted. Panther and Storm are the perfect happy couple. They are totally in love with each other and their relationship is 100% functional. Not that I'm wishing bad luck to the newlyweds, but having some disagreements and quarrels from time to time would help to make their relationship look more real and vivid. It would also create more interest and expectancy in the readership, in my humble opinion.

Well, now that all the wedding stuff is over, I hope that Hudlin surprises us again with captivating, challenging and full action storylines in the line of "Who is the Black Panther?" or "Two the Hard Way," two of my personal favorites of all times. Hail to the Panther Crew and bring on the "Black Avengers."

Gratefully,
Veronica Rodriguez

Hopefully, the "World Tour" story has addressed some of your concerns, Veronica. I would say that the brawl between the Black Panther and Iron Man was anything but sentimental! As for tension between Storm and T'Challa, I'd say we've seen some of that too. (And with Civil War in the couple's future, it's probably safe to assume T'Challa and Storm will soon be faced with plenty of hard times and difficult decisions!)

Hey guys,

I am a huge fan of Storm and have recently become a huge fan of the Black Panther as well. While I do feel the wedding was slightly rushed, I am happy to see Storm in a new position where she has the potential for growth.

Storm's portrayal in the BLACK PANTHER "House of M" tie-in as well as the "Wild Kingdom" crossover was dead-on. Hudlin brought back the strong and powerful goddess who was still human and tangible, very different from the stale role she had assumed during her latter appearances in UNCANNY X-MEN. Seeing this characterization of my favorite character, I had no problem embracing and looking forward to what else Hudlin had in store for her.

This was unfortunately short-lived as since Black Panther and Storm became an official couple, I feel her role has been reduced to Black Panther's wife. While I am aware the book is called "BLACK PANTHER" and not "BLACK PANTHER & STORM," I do feel her character is in need of a huge upgrade. Beyond seeming "dumb struck" by love in the last few issues, her lines in BLACK PANTHER # 19 seemed extremely subservient, which is anything but what we have come to expect from Storm. Not only were her powers downplayed during the battle against Doom (who for some reason has become both racist and sexist), but when she gains the upper hand while Black Panther is fighting Doom one-on-one, she is reprimanded for it. Not only this, but her response is "What's wrong, Beloved?" *"gag"*. The REAL Storm would not have taken that so easily, nor would any powerful woman. This is not the only flaw I have observed in Storm's character, but it affected me enough to make me actually write a letter.

Her mere presence in the book is not going to make Storm fans happy, especially if she is written out of character. Even if she does confront every other being she encounters as a strong and powerful hero (which she hasn't), bowing down to Black Panther and giving in to him just because she is HIS wife and this is HIS book is not acceptable.

The last great characterization of Storm was in Claremont's UNCANNY X-MEN Annual. Storm talks to Jean about her many fears, one being "living just to produce [T'Challa's] heirs (hmmm, wasn't it hinted at Storm being pregnant in BLACK PANTHER # 18?). By the end of the issue Storm confronts the Panther God stating, "If I accept his proposal, I will face him as his equal and will be accepted as his equal by all, or this is as far as it goes." I have yet to see the equality in this relationship, as it appears Black Panther is calling all the shots and Storm is simply there to agree to everything he says. Any thought of her own is quickly thrown out by her agreeing to her "beloved's" ideas or putting all trust in him. How about we see a little of the reverse where T'Challa puts his trust in Ororo, or where she steps up to take command? Storm has been the leader of the X-Men forever, I am sure she is more than capable of making intelligent decisions not only for herself but for her people as the new Queen of Wakanda.

I am sure many of Storm's fans, including myself, have followed her here in hopes we would see her in a new light, but instead she appears to be walking in the shadow of the Black Panther. Please remedy this.

Thank you,
Andre Clarke
Brooklyn, NY

I, myself, am a huge fan of Storm. I definitely see where you're coming from, as do a number of fellow readers. I thought it best to go right to the source on this one. Here is Reggie's response to your letter:

T'Challa and Ororo are both strong leaders in their own right. They are also newlyweds. Anyone who has been married knows that there is an... "adjustment" period for any couple. Even super-couples. Or rather, ESPECIALLY super-couples. Sure, I could have written it so everything was perfect, but that's not the Marvel way, is it? No, we believe in making our fantasy lives as awkward and difficult as our real lives.

If you're asking if Storm is going to change, no, not in the sense of what makes her a great character. Her core values and strengths will never be reduced. However, I also I believe that a great relationship means that you change ea other for the better. Keep reading, and you'll s everything you're looking for and more.

Dear Reggie,

What a great book, man. And what make BLACK PANTHER consistently good is that it political—the only title I know of that has the guts speak its mind. And even better—the title is BLAC PANTHER and that is heavy with history.

Please don't cave to the right-wing Bushi who'd shut you up for speaking out. The Bus administration cares nothing for African-American They let my hometown of New Orleans get destroy and stay devastated. Thank you so much for t issue where the Panther helped out the folks the Crescent City. And thanks for giving us or superhero who specifically gives a damn for bla people. Marvel's lucky to have you.

Power to the King
Jordan Hofe
Monmouth, O

Thank you for your letter, Jordan!

Random fact: Did you know that the characte Black Panther predates the Black Panther Party Who knew?!

Next month, BLACK PANTHER takes on MARVE CIVIL WAR! After meeting with Dr. Doom, th Inhumans, the Sub-Mariner, and Iron Ma himself, Marvel's newest power couple is read to take a stand.

Here's a peek at our next issue:

Whose side are *they* on? Be here in thirty t find out!

--Daniel

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